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(54) Title: **SILYLATED OLIGONUCLEOTIDE COMPOUNDS**

(57) Abstract: Oligonucleotide comprising at least one internucleotide phosphorus atom protected with a group of formula -X^aSiR³R⁴R⁵ provided. X^a represent O or S, and R³, R⁴ and R⁵ each independently are optionally substituted hydrocarbyl groups, selected such that that total number of carbon atoms in R³ plus R⁴ plus R⁵ is 4 or more. Process for the preparation of these oligonucleotides, intermediate compounds useful therein, and process for the preparation of the intermediate compounds are also provided.

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